

PART ONE

An Overview

Includes:

Introduction. Jesus' Latter-day Parables

Chapter 1. A Bridge to the Greater Things

Chapter 2. Preview of the Temporal and Spiritual Parallels

Chapter 3. The Kingdom of God: Both Religious and Political

Chapter 4. Seven Interpretive Keys

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' Latter-day Parables

As the time approached that Jesus would be crucified, he taught largely in parables. This intentionally veiled precious doctrine from the hardened hearts of the wicked. At the same time, to the righteous it enabled him to "utter things which [had] been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:35.) In these latter days, as the Savior's second coming draws nigh, once again He speaks to us in parables -- or *parallels* -- types and shadows. Thus He provides the obedient with greater light and knowledge while the disobedient remain blind; for "seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand." (Mark 4:12.)

The Lord's parables may also take the form of lessons for our time veiled within scriptural history. *Imbedded in the lessons of the past are timeless instructions that apply not only to entire civilizations but to individual souls as well.* These messages are concealed so that only those who "consider themselves fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility" may receive them. (2 Ne. 9:42; Matt. 13:23.) These parable-like parallels will remain forever hidden from "the wise, and the learned, and they that are rich, who are puffed up because of their learning, and their wisdom, and their riches...." (2 Ne. 9:42,43; Matt. 13:22.)

Q. What are "parallels"?

A. Parallel lines follow in the same direction and never intersect. Likewise, the historical patterns of two entire civilization can follow the same general course, even though the two civilizations may never interact. They might be isolated geographically or separated by epochs of time, and yet proceed as if mimicking one another. The time spans over which the

patterns stretch will vary, and yet the patterns remain the same. Such is the case with the history of Lehi's people (as recorded in the Book of Mormon) and the history/prophecy of the people of the house of Israel (as told in the Bible as well as prophesied in all the standard works). These civilizations parallel one another. The house of Israel's redemptive pattern begins from the time that the Lord used Moses to deliver the children of Israel, and concludes at the end of the millennium when Satan's host are cast into outer darkness. The paralleling pattern in Book of Mormon history begins with Lehi leaving Jerusalem and traveling through the wilderness to their promised land, and ends with the Nephites' utter destruction after their open rebellion against God.

On the surface, this may seem like just another way of saying that history repeats itself. However, parallels go far beyond merely identifying cyclical phenomenon. While cycles tend to reflect the fallen nature and depravity of man, parallels point triumphantly to the remedies that bring salvation. Parallels reveal the steps taken as civilizations progress from beginning to end, during which the civilizations may pass through several degenerative cycles. When God is the Shepherd of those civilizations, however, the extended development -- temporary setbacks notwithstanding -- is not toward destruction but exaltation.

While parallels may extend over a lengthy period of time, they can also be found between snapshot segments. Book of Mormon history, from beginning to end, contains one, overreaching parallel, which provides an overview of the Lord's dealings with the house of Israel throughout time. But it also contains innumerable microcosm

parallels that focus on a single section of the overall picture. Most of these isolated parallels illuminate our current situation and the crucial coming years -- a day referred to by many prophets as "great and marvelous."¹

Parallels are not limited to comparisons between nations or civilizations. In their journey through life, individuals seeking salvation follow general patterns that mirror the very patterns through which entire civilizations pass, when their God is the Lord. The same Book of Mormon history pattern that parallels the house of Israel's progression through time, also reflects the progression of an individual as he proceeds in his path to perfection.

These parallels are not confined to the Book of Mormon; they are a prevalent throughout the scriptures. Isaiah, for instance, frequently utilized parallels in his writings. He foretold events of the latter days via prophecies of events that would happen long before our day.² An example is his prophecy of the Assyrian attack on the "hypocritical" kingdom of Israel. This was prophecy at the time he wrote it. He was also using that ancient scenario as a type of what would occur in these latter days. (2 Ne. 20:5,6 = Isa. 10:5,6.)

Isaiah also referred to what was already history in his day, as a precedent for what would be repeated in the latter days.

For example, he said that the divine deliverance of the Lord's people in the latter days, after the Assyrian had trodden them down, would be "according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb." (2 Ne. 20:6,26 = Isa. 10:6,26; 9:4.) The story of Gideon's miraculous victory over the innumerable hosts of Midianite captors was a well-established historical fact known generally at the time Isaiah referred to it. (Judg. 6-7.) (Incidentally, the Book of Mormon parallel for this same latter-day event also ties in to the Gideon scenario. Both ancient deliverance came miraculously through the instrumentality of 300 men.)³

While there are many parallels throughout the standard works, the Book of Mormon is the key to unlocking the most panoramic view of all. This breathtaking vista has been almost completely locked away in the Book of Mormon since the time Joseph Smith translated it. Only more recently have people begun to see this prophetic sketch. Because many saints have been responding faithfully to President Benson's admonitions⁴ for us to use the Book of Mormon as the Lord intended, a hitherto cloaked masterpiece has begun to be unveiled. But the viewing is exclusive. Following the pattern of Jesus' ancient parables, those who harden their hearts to the word of God, will not see. To them these things appear as mere foolish confusion.

Notes for Introduction:

1. Avraham Gileadi, "The Great and Marvelous Work Yet to Come Forth," The Last Days, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1991, pp. 57-112.

2. One of the most authoritative and profound treatise on this concept may be found in Avraham Gileadi's book, The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988. See p. 1,2.

3. See "Breaking of the Yoke" section in the "Again the Second Time" Chapter.

4. President Benson said, "The Book of Mormon was written for us today. God is the author of the book. It is a record of a fallen people, compiled by inspired men for our blessing. Those people never had the book -- it was meant for us. Mormon, the ancient prophet after whom the book is named, abridged centuries of records. God, who knows the end from the beginning, told him what to include in his abridgment that we would need for our day. Mormon turned the records over to his son Moroni, the last recorder; and Moroni, writing over 1,500 years ago but speaking to us today, states: 'Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.' (Morm. 8:35.) As we read and teach, we are to liken the Book of Mormon scriptures to us." (Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon is the Word of God," *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, pp. 3-5.)